

REMARKS

With the entry of the present amendments, claims 1-22, 24, 27-31, 33, and 37 are pending in the application. Claims 1-17 have been allowed. Claims 25, 26, 32, and 34-36 have been canceled. Claim 23 was previously canceled. Claims 18-22, 24, 29-31 and 33 have been amended. The claim amendments either re-write dependent claims in independent form or correct claim dependences.

As discussed below, the present amendments place all of the pending claims in the application in condition for allowance.

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANT AMENDMENT

In the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment mailed on March 23, 2006, the Examiner noted that the claim amendments filed in Applicant's response of February 28, 2006, included a listing of claims showing claim amendments in relation to the claims filed on January 30, 2006, rather than to the claims filed on September 14, 2005. The present listing of claims has corrected this error by showing the claim amendments in relation to the claims filed on September 14, 2005, thereby placing the claim amendments in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121.

RESPONSE TO ADVISORY ACTION

In the Advisory Action the Examiner stated that the previously submitted amendments rearranged the limitations in such a way as to produce new issues. The Examiner further stated that the removal of the limitation "integrated into the polymeric substrate" from Claims 20 and 33 also presented new issues.

The present amendments retain the limitation "integrated into the polymeric substrate" in Claims 20 and 33. All of the remaining rejected claims depend from either Claim 20 or 33. Therefore, the present amendments should address the Examiner's concern with regard to the removal of said limitation.

Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claims 20 and 33 are now in condition for allowance for the reasons that follow.

Claim 20 recites a surface-modified substrate comprising (a) a polymeric substrate; and (b) a surface film having a friction of no more than about 22% relative to hardened steel as measured by a fretting wear test. In the Final Office Action mailed November 29, 2005, the Examiner based her rejections on two publications. As noted by the Examiner in paragraph 13 of the Final Office Action, the first publication (U.S. Patent No. 5,643,343, issued to Selifanov et al. (hereinafter "Selifanov")) teaches *abrasive* particles. Therefore, Selifanov does not teach or suggest a surface film having a friction of "no more than about 22% relative to hardened steel as measured by a fretting wear test." Applicants note that this limitation was originally included in Claim 23 and that Claim 23 was not objected over Selifanov.

The second reference relied upon by the Examiner (U.S. Patent No. 2,697,028, issued to Baker et al. (hereinafter "Baker")), does not teach or suggest carbon films on a polymeric substrate. Instead, Baker discloses carbon films on substrates that are able to withstand high-temperature pyrolysis, such as ceramics, glasses and metals. (See col. 6, line 79 through col. 7, line 2.) Applicants note that Claim 20, which included the limitation of a polymeric substrate as originally filed, was not rejected over Baker in the previous Office Actions. Although, Claim 20 was initially included in the listing of claims rejected over Baker in the Final Office Action, the Examiner acknowledged in a telephone call on January 17, 2006, that Claim 20 should not have been included in that rejection.

Therefore, neither of the publications cited by the Examiner teach or suggest all of the limitations of pending Claim 20. For this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 20 is presently in condition for allowance and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

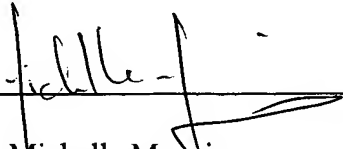
Regarding Claim 33, the Examiner acknowledged in the Final Office Action that Claim 33 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of Claim 20, from which it depended. Claim 33 now includes all of the limitations of Claim 20 from which it previously depended. Therefore, Claim 33 is now in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims pending in the application are now in condition for allowance. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner withdraw all of the rejections and allow the application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is thought that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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